

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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SUBJECT: ARA NARCOTICS COORDINATOR'S CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 197343

1. MISSION HAS FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO MAKE ON PROPOSED
DISCUSSION TOPICS PLANNED FOR MEXICO CITY CONFERENCE:

A) THE GROWTH OF DEA'S PRESENCE AND ROLE IN LATIN AMERICA:
THE STRONGER PRESENCE OF DEA PERSONNEL, AT LEAST IN ECUADOR,
PROVIDES A RESERVOIR OF EXPERTISE IN NARCOTICS CONTROL WHICH
SHOULD PROVE MORE AND MORE USEFUL AS TIME PASSES. OF COURSE,
THIS IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON THE AGENTS THEMSELVES AND THE
DEGREE OF RAPPORT THEY ESTABLISH WITH NATIONAL POLICE
ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS. PRESENT STRENGTH PROGRAMMED FOR
ECUADOR (2 AGENTS AND AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER IN QUITO AND
3 AGENTS IN GUAYAQUIL) IS CONSIDERED IDEAL AT THIS TIME
AND, DEPENDING ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AGENTS IN
ENLISTING THE COOPERATION OF ECUADOREAN OFFICIALS IN TRAINING
AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES, COULD CONCEIVABLY BE REDUCED IN
THE FUTURE. WE WILL BE INTERESTED IN THE EXPERIENCE OF
OTHER POSTS.

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B) COUNTRY TEAM-DEA RELATIONS: COUNTRY TEAM-DEA RELATIONS ARE EXCELLENT; THERE IS GOOD INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND INFORMAL AS WELL AS FORMAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE EXCELLENT. IN ECUADOR SOME SPECIAL EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ACHIEVE THIS STATUS.

C) GROWING INTEREST IN PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS: GOE HAS BEGUN A GENERAL DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION PLAN WITH PROGRAM OF SEMINARS FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND INTRODUCTION OF DRUG ABUSE THEMES INTO SUCH COURSES AS BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, ANATOMY, ETC. FURTHER, A PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAMPAIGN USING RADIO, PRESS AND TV HAS BEEN INITIATED. INCREASED GOVERNMENT FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE FROM PETROLEUM REVENUES HAVE PERMITTED THE GOE TO BEGIN MORE ACTIVE PROGRAMS OF TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION. WE BELIEVE THAT AS GOE AUTHORITIES, ASSISTED BY THE INFORMATION AND EXPERTISE PROVIDED BY DEA AND AID, MOVE MORE DEEPLY INTO THESE ACTIVITIES, THE DIMENSIONS OF THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM WILL BE REVEALED AS MUCH GREATER THAN GOE AUTHORITIES ORIGINALLY THOUGHT AND WILL LEAD TO CONTINUING AND GREATER ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO HEAR WHAT OTHER POSTS HAVE EXPERIENCED.

2. IN ECUADOR, AS A RESULT OF GREATER EFFORT ON THE PART OF DEA AND A SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL CALLS ON IMPORTANT GOE OFFICIALS, THERE HAS BEEN A DRASTIC CHANGE IN THE ENFORCEMENT EFFORT IN ECUADOR. A GREATER NUMBER OF SEIZURES AND ARRESTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED AND COOPERATION BETWEEN DEA AND GOE OFFICIALS HAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY. PERHAPS, IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENTATIVES FROM COUNTRIES WHERE CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED TO MAKE SHORT PRESENTATIONS, WHICH COULD BE OF VALUE TO OTHERS, AT SOME TIME DURING THE MEETING.
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